

inSiGHT

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Going Fully Online

Lecturers adapting to remote teaching during COVID-19 Pandemic.



UNIMAS INSPIRE

Launching of UNIMAS Inspiring Learning Spaces

*Embracing
The New
Normal*
in Teaching and Learning

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Chief Editor's Message

Dear readers,

In this edition of InSiGHT, we are presented with articles that are centred on the new normal in teaching and learning in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the movement control order imposed by the government. The sudden transition to online learning may not have caught higher education by surprise since blended learning has been implemented for a while, but the speed of the transition has caused quite a stir not only among faculty members but also students.

It is encouraging to see that UNIMAS academics have responded well to the efforts to mitigate the impact of emergency remote teaching. This is evident by the sharing of efforts made through the articles in this volume. Lecturers from diverse faculties have demonstrated how they modified their usual practices in order to support teaching and learning during the time when physical face-to-face interactions may not be possible.

While some shared their experience in coping with the shift to fully online learning mode, there are also lecturers who provided tips in producing teaching videos as well as effective strategies to carry out assessments and examination online. Indeed, it is heartwarming to see the tremendous commitment given by the academics. Kudos to everyone for making sure students are not left behind in their learning despite challenges faced during this period of uncertainty.

The Centre for Applied Learning and Multimedia (CALM) will continue to support the lecturers and students in this endeavour. I hope you enjoy reading the articles shared in this volume as much as I did and I would also like to invite you to contribute in our future volumes.

Keep calm and happy reading!

Professor Dr Chen Chwen Jen

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Reaching the Unreachable: Remote Learning for Remote Learners?

Teaching and Learning During “Old Normal” and “New Normal”: Modifications, Justifications and Lessons Learnt

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Teaching, learning and assessment activities are crucial part of a course delivery in educational institutions. While face-to-face (F2F) teaching remains as an important component of teaching and learning, blended and online learning have grown progressively over the past few years and become an essential part of educational institutions around the globe. In 2020 the need to deliver courses fully online was suddenly amplified by the movement control measures implemented due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has forced the courses which were taught F2F or in a blended manner, to be taught fully online. This sole online teaching approach requires some significant changes to not only the course delivery but also every aspect of teaching and learning.

The vast literature in teaching and learning acknowledges the challenges faced by instructors when moving from F2F or blended teaching environment to online teaching (De Gagne, & Walters, 2009; McQuiggan, 2007; Worley & Tesdell, 2009), however, only a handful of studies has focused on the instructors and explored the changes made as well as their thought processes (Connolly, Jones, & Jones, 2007; Redmond, 2011).

This article provides a personal yet professional account of two lecturers' journey in adapting themselves to the new normal of teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. It provides description of the modifications made by the course

instructors to their teaching, learning, evaluation and other related activities when they had to shift from blended to full online course delivery. The paper also discusses the similarities and differences as well as the new lessons learnt from their endeavour.

The Beginning

Our semester for undergraduate study in UNIMAS started on 28 January 2020 as scheduled in the UNIMAS Academic Calendar for Undergraduate Study for Semester 2 Academic Session 2019/2020. As usual we had a normal start to the semester and went on with the first 7 weeks of teaching. Then, our students went on their mid semester break on 14 March 2020 and were supposed to return to campus on 22 March 2020 to resume classes. On the other hand, as the spread of COVID-19 pandemic across the globe was worsening, the news on possible lockdown was brewing in Malaysia. The Movement Control Order (MCO) was implemented in Malaysia on 18 March 2020. Initially it was intended for a period of two weeks and was expected to end on 31 March 2020 (Tang, 2020). It was only natural that we thought of it as a temporary situation. Also, since the students were on mid semester break, we assumed that it would be a short extension to the mid semester break. At this point, we were not too worried as we expected to resume teaching and learning activities as usual in April 2020. However, this expectation was